

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT TACOMA

WILLIE BANKS, SR.

Plaintiff,

V.

STATE OF WASHINGTON, *et al.*,

Defendants.

No. C09-5449 RBL/KLS

ORDER TO AMEND OR SHOW CAUSE

This matter has been referred to Magistrate Judge Karen L. Strombom pursuant to 28

U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), Local Rules MJR 3 and 4. Plaintiff has been granted leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*. Dkt. 4. The case is before the Court upon review of Plaintiff's complaint.

After reviewing the Complaint and balance of the record, the Court finds and orders as follows:

I. DISCUSSION

Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995, the Court is required to screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief against a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the prisoner has raised claims that are legally “frivolous or malicious,” that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A(b)(1), (2) and 1915(e)(2); See *Barren v. Harrington*, 152 F.3d 1193 (9th Cir. 1998).

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1 A complaint is legally frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis in law or fact. *Neitzke v.*
2 *Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989); *Franklin v. Murphy*, 745 F.2d 1221, 1227-28 (9th Cir.
3 1984). The court may, therefore, dismiss a claim as frivolous where it is based on an
4 indisputably meritless legal theory or where the factual contentions are clearly baseless. *Neitzke*,
5 490 U.S. at 327. A complaint or portion thereof, will be dismissed for failure to state a claim
6 upon which relief may be granted if it appears the “[f]actual allegations . . . [fail to] raise a right
7 to relief above the speculative level, on the assumption that all the allegations in the complaint
8 are true.” See *Bell Atlantic, Corp. v. Twombly*, 127 S.Ct. 1955, 1965 (2007)(citations omitted).
9 In other words, failure to present enough facts to state a claim for relief that is plausible on the
10 face of the complaint will subject that complaint to dismissal. *Id.* at 1974.

12 The court must construe the pleading in the light most favorable to plaintiff and resolve
13 all doubts in plaintiff’s favor. *Jenkins v. McKeithen*, 395 U.S. 411, 421 (1969). Although
14 complaints are to be liberally construed in a plaintiff’s favor, conclusory allegations of the law,
15 unsupported conclusions, and unwarranted inferences need not be accepted as true. *Id.* While the
16 court can liberally construe plaintiff’s complaint, it cannot supply an essential fact an inmate has
17 failed to plead. *Pena*, 976 F.2d at 471 (quoting *Ivey v. Board of Regents of Univ. of Alaska*, 673
18 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)).

20 Unless it is absolutely clear that amendment would be futile, however, a pro se litigant
21 must be given the opportunity to amend his complaint to correct any deficiencies. *Noll v.*
22 *Carlson*, 809 F.2d 1446, 1448 (9th Cir. 1987).

24 On the basis of these standards, Mr. Banks appears to have failed to state a claim upon
25 which relief can be granted.

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1 Mr. Banks purports to sue the State of Washington, a superior court judge and Western
2 State Hospital because his state court trial, originally scheduled to begin on June 29, 2009, was
3 continued while he was forced to undergo a mental evaluation at Western State Hospital. Dkt. 5,
4 pp. 3-4. Mr. Banks asks to be immediately released from restraint. Dkt. 5, p. 5.

5 To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, at least two elements must be met: (1) the
6 defendant must be a person acting under color of state law, (2) and his conduct must have
7 deprived the plaintiff of rights, privileges or immunities secured by the constitution or laws of
8 the United States. *Paratt v. Taylor*, 451 U.S. 527, 535 (1981).

10 This action challenges the propriety of ongoing proceedings in Cowlitz County Superior
11 Court. Generally, federal courts will not intervene in a pending criminal proceeding absent
12 extraordinary circumstances where the danger of irreparable harm is both great and immediate.
13 See *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, 45-46 (1971); see also *Fort Belknap Indian Community v.*
14 *Mazurek*, 43 F.3d 428, 431 (9th Cir.1994), cert. denied, 116 S.Ct. 49 (1995) (abstention
15 appropriate if ongoing state judicial proceedings implicate important state interests and offer
16 adequate opportunity to litigate federal constitutional issues); *World Famous Drinking*
17 *Emporium v. City of Tempe*, 820 F.2d 1079, 1082 (9th Cir.1987)(Younger abstention doctrine
18 applies when the following three conditions exist: (1) ongoing state judicial proceeding; (2)
19 implication of an important state interest in the proceeding; and (3) an adequate opportunity to
20 raise federal questions in the proceedings).

22 Only in the most unusual circumstances is a petitioner entitled to have the federal court
23 intervene by way of injunction or habeas corpus until after the jury comes in, judgment has been
24 appealed from and the case concluded in the state courts. *Drury v. Cox*, 457 F.2d 764, 764-65
25 (9th Cir.1972). See *Carden v. Montana*, 626 F.2d 82, 83-84 (9th Cir.), cert. denied, 449 U.S.

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1 1014 (1980). Extraordinary circumstances exist where irreparable injury is both great and
2 immediate, for example where the state law is flagrantly and patently violative of express
3 constitutional prohibitions or where there is a showing of bad faith, harassment, or other unusual
4 circumstances that would call for equitable relief. *Younger*, 401 U.S. at 46, 53-54.

5 Here, the Plaintiff has not plead any extraordinary circumstances warranting intervention
6 by this Court in any ongoing state proceeding. He has also not plead any violation of rights
7 protected by the Constitution or federal statute. If Plaintiff wishes to proceed with a claim, he
8 must provide a short and plain statement indicating how he has suffered a violation of rights
9 protected by the Constitution or federal statute. He must further describe how such violation was
10 proximately caused by a person acting under color of state or federal law.

12 Plaintiff is also advised that under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, claims can only be brought against
13 people who personally participated in causing the alleged deprivation of a constitutional right.
14 *Arnold v. IBM*, 637 F.2d 1350, 1355 (9th Cir. 1981). Neither a State nor its officials acting in
15 their official capacities are “persons” under section 1983. *Will v. Michigan Dept. of State Police*,
16 491 U.S. 58, 71 (1989). Thus, the “State of Washington” is not a “person” under §1983.
17 “Western State Hospital,” is also not a “person” under section 1983.

19 Plaintiff names Western State Hospital as a defendant, but fails to allege facts or name
20 specific individuals to support any claim of constitutional harm. This is not sufficient to state a
21 claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Plaintiff must set forth facts describing when and where and by
22 whom he was deprived of a constitutional right. Plaintiff's Complaint must include factual
23 allegations describing how each individual caused or personally participated in causing him the
24 harm that he claims he suffered. In addition, Plaintiff must name the individuals who are
25 responsible for causing him harm. It is not sufficient to merely name individuals in supervisory
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1 positions. He must name the individual defendants who violated his federal rights and he must
2 allege facts showing how individually named defendants caused or personally participated in
3 causing the harm alleged in the complaint. *Arnold v. IBM*, 637 F.2d 1350, 1355 (9th Cir. 1981).
4 A defendant cannot be held liable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 solely on the basis of supervisory
5 responsibility or position. *Monell v. New York City Dept. of Social Services*, 436 U.S. 658, 694
6 n.58 (1978). A theory of *respondeat superior* is not sufficient to state a § 1983 claim. *Padway v.*
7 *Palches*, 665 F.2d 965 (9th Cir. 1982).

9 Plaintiff also purports to sue Judge Steven Warning, a judge of the Superior Court of
10 Cowlitz County, Washington. However, judges are absolutely immune from liability for
11 damages in civil rights suits for judicial acts performed within their subject matter jurisdiction.
12 *Stump v. Sparkman*, 435 U.S. 349, 356 (1978); *Ashelman v. Pope*, 793 F.2d 1072, 1075 (9th Cir.
13 1986) (en banc); *Schucker v. Rockwood*, 846 F.2d 1202, 1204 (9th Cir. 1988) (per curiam). Acts
14 are judicial where the acts are normally performed by a judge, and where the parties deal with
15 the judge in his or her judicial capacity. *Sparkman*, 435 U.S. at 362; *Crooks v. Maynard*, 913
16 F.2d 699, 700 (9th Cir. 1990). A judge will not be deprived of immunity because the action he
17 took was in error, was done maliciously, or was in excess of his authority; rather, he will be
18 subject to liability only when he has acted in the clear absence of all jurisdiction, *Sparkman*, 435
19 U.S. at 356-57 (citation omitted); that is, when he or she acts in a private or nonjudicial capacity,
20 see *Henzel v. Gerstein*, 608 F.2d 658 (5th Cir. 1979).

22 Due to the deficiencies described above, the Court will not serve the complaint. Mr.
23 Banks may file an amended complaint curing, if possible, the above noted deficiencies, or show
24 cause explaining why this matter should not be dismissed no later than **September 25, 2009**. If
25 Mr. Banks chooses to file an amended complaint, which seeks relief cognizable under 42 U.S.C.
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1 § 1983, his amended complaint shall consist of a short and plain statement showing that he is
2 entitled to relief, and he must allege with specificity the following:

3 1) the names of the persons who caused or personally participated in causing the alleged
4 deprivation of his constitutional rights;

5 2) the dates on which the conduct of each defendant allegedly took place; and

6 3) the specific conduct or action Plaintiff alleges is unconstitutional.

7 Mr. Banks shall set forth his factual allegations in separately numbered paragraphs. The
8 amended complaint shall operate as a complete substitute for (rather than a mere supplement to)
9 the present complaint. Mr. Banks shall present his complaint on the form provided by the Court.
10 The amended complaint must be legibly rewritten or retyped in its entirety, it should be an
11 original and not a copy, it may not incorporate any part of the original complaint by reference,
12 and it must be clearly labeled the “First Amended Complaint” and Cause Number C09-5449
13 RBL/KLS must be written in the caption. Additionally, Plaintiff must submit a copy of the “First
14 Amended Complaint” for service on each named Defendant.

16 If Mr. Banks decides to file an amended civil rights complaint in this action, he is
17 cautioned that if the amended complaint is not timely filed or if he fails to adequately address the
18 issues raised herein on or before **September 25, 2009**, the Court will recommend dismissal of
19 this action as frivolous pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915 and the dismissal will count as a “strike”
20 under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g). Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g), enacted April 26, 1996, a prisoner
21 who brings three or more civil actions or appeals which are dismissed on grounds they are
22 legally frivolous, malicious, or fail to state a claim, will be precluded from bringing any other
23 civil action or appeal in forma pauperis “unless the prisoner is under imminent danger of serious
24 physical injury.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

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1 **The Clerk is directed to send Mr. Banks the appropriate form for filing a 42 U.S.C.**
2 **1983 civil rights complaint. The Clerk is further directed to send a copy of this Order and**
3 **a copy of the General Order to Plaintiff.**

4 It is further **ORDERED** that Plaintiff's Motion for Order of Immediate Release from
5 Custody and Dismissal with Prejudice (Dkt. 6) is **DENIED** as premature. The Court has not yet
6 accepted an appropriate or sufficient complaint nor has any defendant yet been served.
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9 DATED this 1st day of September, 2009.

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12 Karen L. Strombom
13 United States Magistrate Judge